

**WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DIVISION &
GULF OF MEXICO PROGRAM OFFICE**

All Branch Weekly Activity Report - Week Ending 9/25/15

WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DIVISION

IMMEDIATE OFFICE

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS BRANCH

NORTH AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (NADB) AWARD: Region 6 Assistance Programs Branch staff has finalized the Funding Recommendation and Commitment Notice for the North American Development Bank in support of the United States/Mexico Border Infrastructure Program. The grant will provide financial assistance to communities along the U.S./Mexico Border area. The grant application was received in Region 6 during 4th quarter Fiscal Year 2015. The Funding Recommendation and Commitment Notice were used to prepare the award document in the amount of \$2,980,329. **Salvador Gandara, 665-3194 (6WQ-AB); Gilbert Tellez, (915) 533-7273 (6WQ-AB)**

THE CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION RECEIVES WATER PROGRAM FUNDS: The Water Quality Protection Division awarded \$92,985 in fiscal year 2015 funds to the Citizen Potawatomi Nation to support the tribe's water pollution control program. These funds are awarded under the authority of Section 106 of the Clean Water Act and are included in the tribe's Performance Partnership Grant. The funding will support monitoring to assess surface water quality on tribal lands. **Kara Alexander, 665-7312**

THE CHOCTAW NATION RECEIVES WATER PROGRAM FUNDS: The Water Quality Protection Division awarded \$82,033 in fiscal year 2015 funds to the Choctaw Nation to support the tribe's water pollution control program. These funds are awarded under the authority of Section 106 of the Clean Water Act and are included in the tribe's Performance Partnership Grant. The funding will support monitoring to assess surface water quality on tribal lands. **Kara Alexander, 665-7312**

\$23.3 MILLION TEXAS DWSRF DRAW FOR MONTH OF SEPTEMBER: This month the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) has drawn down their largest single month amount in the history of their Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program. As of September 23, 2015, the TWDB has drawn down \$23,387,960 in DWSRF program funds, of which \$14.2 million was a single draw for reimbursement of construction projects. As a result, their ULO balance of \$174 million is bringing them closer to reaching our agency's goal of expending all legacy ULO by September 2016. TWDB will continue to submit their DWSRF ULO report to EPA on a quarterly basis. Upon receipt of the report, Region 6 will carefully scrutinize it to help decide any next course of action, in an effort to avoid a ULO non-compliance situation. **Claudia Hosch, 665-6464; Maurice Rawls, 665-8049; Ruben Camacho, 665-7599; Javier Ballí, 665-7261**

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT PROJECT GRANT FUNDS CLOSES PROJECT FILE XP-976789-01. The Water Quality Protection Division closed the project file for an award with the San Antonio Water System (Brooks City Base), City of San Antonio, Texas in the award amount of \$1,253,600 from Fiscal Year 2004 Appropriation. The project was awarded for water infrastructure improvements to benefit public health and environmental safety to residents of Brooks City base of the San Antonio Water System. The project replaced 26,000 linear feet of 6-10 inch asbestos cement pipe and 2.5 miles of water & wastewater lines. The replacements removed asbestos material and avoids wastewater contamination of soil, as well as separate the re-cycle water lines from potable waterlines. **Claudia Hosch, 665-6464; Maurice Rawls, 665-8049; Dena Hurst, 665-7283; George Craft, 665-6684**

TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD RECEIVES CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 319 COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT AWARD: The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) has been awarded \$3,565,900 of federal Clean Water Act (CWA) §319(h) cooperative agreement funds. The funds will be used to manage and implement the Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program, which is designed to meet the goals of the CWA. Funds will be used in priority watersheds to develop and implement Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs), Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and associated Implementation Plans (I-Plans), Water Quality Management Plans (WQMPs) and other state, regional and local plans or programs. Workplan deliverables include: Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation for surface and ground water activities; EPA-approved Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs); monitoring information; education and outreach activities, including watershed group formation; semi-annual reports; and final reports describing the success of the NPS monitoring and management practices. **Henry Brewer, 665-8146; Mike Bira, 665-6668; Anthony Suttice, 665-8590**

ECOSYSTEMS PROTECTION BRANCH

TRASH FREE WATERS: Doug Jacobson and Renee Bellew (6PD-U) worked with representatives from EPA Headquarters to set up two meetings in Texas held in Galveston on September 16 and Dallas on September 18. The Galveston meeting was held in conjunction with the non-profit organizations Artist Boat and Galveston County Parks Board to develop a program to eliminate trash and abandoned recreational items left on beaches by the 6 million visitors to Galveston Island each year. The Dallas meeting convened municipal and NGO representatives in person and by telephone to develop a new project to replace the “tire” project found in HQ’s Trash Free Waters Plan for the Gulf of Mexico States. After much discussion and consideration of a half dozen projects, the group decided to expand the “Adopt A ...” concept. Recognizing the strong State pride that Texans feel, the group will seek to synergize the many volunteer efforts and public awareness campaigns that can be found in programs like Adopt A Highway, Adopt A Street, etc. and Don’t Mess With Texas campaign. Additional components will be developed to eliminate littering, including working with manufacturers and retailers, utilizing social media, and increasing outdoor learning. Project work plans will be developed over the next few weeks, and as each project is implemented, project champions will lead the charge with the facilitation from EPA. **Doug Jacobson, 65-6692; Renee Bellew, 665-2793**

PLANNING & ANALYSIS BRANCH

REGION 6 WEB: The OneEPA Web initiative is scheduled to take effect next week. After September 30, 2015, all existing EPA Region 6 webpages that are not converted to the new format will be taken off line. During this OneEPA transition, webpage addresses (URLs) will be change for many web pages on www.epa.gov. It is important to note the following:

- Web pages that have been moved into the WebCMS will have new URLs, and links to these pages may break.
- Your bookmarks may no longer work for the same reason.
- New “Page Not Found” notifications will help you find what you are looking for by providing suggested search terms, links to our A-Z index, and other helpful links.

Andrea Abshire 665-6706

THE 10TH NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK DAY: On September 26, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) will sponsor the 10th National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to safely and legally dispose of any unneeded pills, including prescription pain pills and other controlled substance medications, as these pills can only be accepted for disposal when law enforcement is present. Collection sites are now listed online. The take-back service is free and anonymous, with no questions asked. Sites will accept tablets, capsules, and all other solid dosage forms of unwanted medication. Personal information may be blacked out on prescription bottles or medications may be emptied from the bottles into the bins provided at the events. Check the DEA collection site locator often, as new locations will be added until September 26, 2015, at <http://www.takebackyourmeds.org/dea-events> **Terry L. Branch, 665-6667**

INTEGRATED COMPLIANCE INFORMATION SYSTEM (ICIS) NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES) OUTFALLS AND FACILITIES UPDATE: The Surface Water Center (SWC) recently updated ICIS-NPDES outfall and facility locations for Region 6. These layers are updated annually and posted on the regional GIS Share1 server with the new updates scheduled in a few weeks when the new Management Division server technician will start supporting the GIS Share1 updates. The shapefiles (format for Geographic Information System, GIS, software) contain location and flow information for the permits in the ICIS database. **Bob Kirkland, 665-6798**

US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (USGS) NATIONAL WATER INFORMATION SYSTEM (NWIS) AND EPA STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM (STORET) SITE INFORMATION UPDATE: The Surface Water Center (SWC) recently updated the USGS NWIS and EPA STORET site information for Region 6. These layers are updated annually and posted on the Regional GIS Share1 server with the new updates scheduled in a few weeks when the new Management Division server technician will start supporting the GIS Share1 updates. This update should capture any changes or additions to these locations input by the USGS and EPA over the last year. **Bob Kirkland, 665-6798**

THE SCIENCE ACADEMY OF SOUTH TEXAS INTERVIEW: A member of the Surface Water Center was interviewed by two students at The Science Academy of South Texas on Tuesday, September 22, 2015. The students are working on a project for their Principals of Engineering class and wanted to discuss Environmental Engineering with an industry professional. The questions centered on the responsibilities and tasks of an environmental engineer, advantages and disadvantages of the job and high school courses related to the career. **Patricia A. Taylor, 665-6403**

COLLABORATION WITH CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK DOCTORAL CANDIDATE ON TEXAS PUBLICALLY OWNED TREATMENT WORKS (POTW): The Surface Water Center (SWC) is currently collaborating with a doctoral candidate from the City University of New York (CUNY) to compare Texas and New York State water use. The SWC is providing Texas POTW Discharge Monitoring Report (DMR) Flow values for this purpose. Further work is planned by providing support with determination of the basin characteristics for permitted facilities. **Bob Kirkland, 665-6798**

LOUISIANA 2017 COASTAL MASTER PLAN MODELING UPDATE WEBINAR: A member of the Surface Water Center listened in on parts of the modeling update webinar. This event is part of a series of technical updates on different aspects of 2017 Coastal Master Plan development and focused on the suite of modeling tools that has been developed to support the 2017 Coastal Master Plan. **Patricia A. Taylor, 665-6403**

eROUTING ISSUES: Errors have been reported when trying to sign/create routing slips. The cause of the errors has been identified and Larry Koss, the eRouting developer, is currently working on a solution. **Andrea Abshire 665-6706**

NPDES PERMITS & TMDLS BRANCH

ILLINOIS RIVER WATERSHED MODELING PROJECT PRINCIPALS CALL: On September 22, 2015, EPA Region 6 will hold a principals' call with representatives from Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission and the Cherokee Nation to discuss the Illinois River Watershed Modeling project. This call will discuss the status of the project including the outcome of the peer review of the model and will set the stage for reduction scenario discussion to inform the eventual drafting of TMDLs for the watershed. **Taimur Shaikh, 665-7181; Stacey Dwyer, 665-7538**

PRE PERMIT CONSULTATION WITH PUEBLO OF ISLETA AND PUEBLO OF SANTA ANA: The Associate Director of the NPDES Branch and the NPDES Permits Section Chief conducted two pre permit consultation meetings with Tribal Environmental staff on September 17-18, 2015. The meeting with the Pueblo of Isleta environmental staff focused on the upcoming renewal of the Albuquerque Bernalillo NPDES permit. Pueblo of Isleta requested stronger language in the NPDES permit to require the permittee to issue final reports on actions taken to address problems identified at the plant. EPA will be exploring Next Generation tools

and language to be incorporated into the next permit cycle. The Pueblo of Santa Ana has Treatment as a State for Water Quality Standards. EPA discussed with the representatives their rights under 401 a 2 as a downstream “State,” whose water quality standards must be protected. The environmental staff indicates that they are exploring TAS for TMDLs as well as 303 (d) impaired waters. **Stacey Dwyer, 665-6729; Brent Larsen, 665-7523**

REGION 6 APPROVES THE SACRAMENTO MOUNTAINS TMDLS SUBMITTED BY NMED: On August 18, 2015, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) submitted the *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Sacramento Mountains (Rio Hondo, Tularosa, and Rio Penasco)* to EPA Region 6 for review and approval. EPA approved the TMDLs on Monday, September 21, 2015. The TMDL was written to address impairments for bacteria and turbidity for eight waterbody-pollutant pairs. The TMDL affects one NPDES permitted discharge: City of Ruidoso Downs/Village of Ruidoso Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), NM0029165. The WWTP is assigned a WLA for both *E. coli* and turbidity. **Miranda Hodgkiss, 665-7538**

LOWER RIO GRANDE WATERSHED INITIATIVE PRESENTATION AT BORDER 2020 NATIONAL COORDINATORS MEETING: On September 22, 2015, the TCEQ, provided a presentation on the progress, status, and future planning activities for the Lower Rio Grande Watershed Initiative. This presentation was a part of the Border 2020 Program’s National Coordinators Meeting held September 21-23, 2015, in El Paso, Texas. The National Coordinators meeting is a forum to showcase accomplishments from the Border 2020 Program and reexamine the goals and objectives and operations of the program. **Katrina Higgins-Coltrain, 665-8143**

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON WATER QUALITY MARKETS: NPDES Permits and TMDLS Branch’s Mike Carrillo and Denise Hamilton attended the water quality trading workshop in Lincoln, NE, on September 17-19. The workshop was the first and only follow-up to the national gathering ten years earlier. Approximately 200 attendees from EPA, USDA, USGS, state environment and conservation organizations, cities, industries, the agriculture sector, non-profits and consultants heard updates on trading programs in the US and Canada, focusing on successful relationships and lessons learned between the agriculture industry and regulated entities. Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, who is planning to establish a water quality trading program, also attended from Region 6. **Denise Hamilton, 665-2775; Mike Carrillo, 665-7381**

PRETREATMENT PROGRAM AUDIT & MUNICIPAL POLLUTION PREVENTION ASSESSMENT FOR THE CITY OF RIO RANCHO, NM: Representatives of the Permits Oversight Section of the NPDES Permits and TMDL Branch, led a Pretreatment Program Audit/Municipal Pollution Prevention Assessment (MPPA) of the City of Rio Rancho, New Mexico Pretreatment Program on September 21-23, 2015. The Audit/MPPA focused on Pollution Prevention activities and Pretreatment Program implementation. **Rudy Molina, 665-6731**

PESTICIDE NPDES GENERAL PERMIT CONFERENCE CALL: A representative of the NPDES Permits and TMDL Branch participated on a conference call Tuesday,

September 22, 2015 regarding the reissuance of the EPA's Pesticide General Permit. There are no significant revisions from the previous permit issued in 2011. The current permit requires coverage for point source discharges from the application of pesticides into waters of the U.S. Coverage under the permit includes pesticide use for mosquitos and flying insects, animal pest control, weed and algae control, and forest canopy control. Approximately 357 notices of intent were submitted nation-wide. The permit will expire October 31, 2016, and the proposed permit is tentatively scheduled to be published by December 2015. In Region 6, the EPA Pesticide General permit applies to New Mexico. Other delegated states (Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, and Oklahoma) are the permitting authority for the administration of the Pesticide General permit. **Kilty Baskin, 665-7500**

CALL WITH OWM WATER PERMITS DIVISION ON ARKANSAS PERMIT

QUALITY REVIEW (PQR): On September 23, 2015, representatives of the NPDES Permits and TMDLs Branch participated in a call with EPA Headquarters to discuss the PQR planning process for the Arkansas NPDES program. Region 6 conducts a permit quality review of one of the Region's NPDES programs annually, and the review of Arkansas NPDES program is scheduled for November 3-4, 2015. This year's review will be the first time the Region has led the PQR process for the Arkansas program, and the review will include both core program and regional topics of interest. **Monica Burrell, 665-7530**

316b RULE IMPLEMENTATION CONFERENCE CALL: Representatives of the NPDES Permits and TMDL Branch participated on a conference call Thursday, September 24, 2015, with other Regional offices and State Agencies to discuss implementation requirements of the Final Phase II 316(b) Rule. These calls are scheduled on a monthly basis to provide technical guidance, coordination, and consistency in establishing permit conditions and requirements to entities that are subject to the Final Rule and/or Section 316(b) of the Clean Water Act. The Final Rule was promulgated August 14, 2014, and became effective October 15, 2014. It establishes requirements for all existing power generating facilities and manufacturing plants that operate cooling water intake structures (CWISs) to reflect best technology available (BTA) that would minimize adverse environmental impacts (AEI) (impingement and entrainment) on aquatic life. **Kilty Baskin, 665-7500; Paul Kaspar, 665-7459**

BRITISH PETROLEUM (BP): 6RC scheduled a meeting for October 7, 2015, with British Petroleum new environmental personnel to have a general discussion regarding BP's activities in the Gulf of Mexico. **Isaac Chen, 665-7364**

OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS GENERAL PERMIT (GMG290000): A meeting was scheduled for October 15, 2015, among EPA staff and Offshore Operators Committee (OOC) and other operator associates members and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and Bureau of Safety and Environment Enforcement (BSEE) to discuss permit renewal of the Offshore General Permit. **Brent Larsen, 665-7523; Isaac Chen, 665-7364**

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION BRANCH

OKLAHOMA CORPORATION COMMISSION DENIES FIVE DISPOSAL WELL PERMITS: For the first time, Commissioners at the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

(OCC) turned down five disposal well permits due to seismicity concerns. Previously, operators agreed to additional restrictions and were given an order allowing disposal operations. This time the applications were denied. On September 18th, two M4+ earthquakes rocked the area around numerous oil tank farms at Cushing, Oklahoma. Cushing's nickname is "The Pipeline Crossroads of the World." It's one of the largest crude oil storage hubs in the world with approximately 85 million barrels of crude oil storage capacity. Two disposal wells in the area have been shut-down and three others had their rates reduced. Geologist, Robert Jackman sent Matt Skinner at OCC, an 'open email' pointing out the nature of the Arbuckle formation (lots of fractures and natural caverns), makes the orders to plug back a short distance above the basement to be ineffective. (This concern had been mentioned over a year ago in a discussion between EPA and OCC representatives.) Mr. Jackman's e-mail went on to request clarification on what limit of disposal volumes was considered to be safe. **Nancy Dorsey, 665-2294; Philip Dellinger, 665-8324**

NO COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM OKLAHOMA CORPORATION COMMISSION ON DRAFT EPA 2014 UIC END-OF-YEAR: The Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) staff reviewed the EPA underground injection control (UIC) draft End-of-Year (EOY) for 2014, prior to finalization. The Director of the Oil & Gas Division thought the report was a 'little harsh' on OCC's database program, but his staff assured him it was not. There were no comments on the seismicity portion of the report, the EOY is now circulating through e-routing. The press is awaiting the release of the EOY for ongoing reporting on induced seismicity in Oklahoma. The draft completed an extensive internal review of the report. **Nancy Dorsey, 665-2294**

REVISED TOTAL COLIFORM RULE TRAINING IN ARKANSAS: On September 24, 2015, two members of the Drinking Water section provided Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR) train-the-trainer training in Little Rock, Arkansas to the Arkansas Department of Health and two other technical assistance providers: Arkansas Rural Water Association (ARWA) and Arkansas Community Resource Group. The training was tailored to ADH's special primacy requirements including the state's flexibility for rule implementation. The RTCR becomes effective on April 1, 2016 and is applicable to an estimated 1100 public water systems in Arkansas. The rule establishes a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for *E. coli* and uses *E. coli* and total coliforms to initiate a "find and fix" approach to address fecal contamination that could enter into the distribution system. It requires public water systems (PWSs) to perform assessments to identify sanitary defects and subsequently take action to correct them. **Nancy Ho, 665-3179; Andy Waite, 665-7332**

SUITABILITY OF LOG DATA FROM RRC'S WISE COUNTY WATER MONITORING WELL NO. 2 FOR WATER SALINITY ESTIMATES IS SCRUTINIZED: Following its review of the Wise County Project draft report, the RRC's (Railroad Commission of Texas) Groundwater Advisory Unit provided comments on water salinity estimates methodology. Picking up on the discussed methodology, one member of the Ground Water/UIC Section researched the suitability of the Groundwater Advisory Unit's Estep Method for estimating water salinities at the RRC's Water Monitoring Well No. 2 using this well's composite log data, as part of efforts aimed at understanding how area drinking water wells became impacted by brine. It was determined that this log's uncharacteristic resistivity data doesn't lead to reliable

water salinity estimates, a conclusion that a member of the Groundwater Advisory Unit agreed with. **José Eduardo Torres, 665-8092**

BORDER 2020 PRESENTATION ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING DRAWS

QUESTIONS ON DISPOSAL WELLS: The Ground Water Center Coordinator made a presentation to the Border 2020 meeting in El Paso on September 22, 2015, on the findings of the Interim Report of the National Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources. Following the presentation, participants' questions focused on disposal operations and options, primarily disposal wells and their safety. It was acknowledged that Oklahoma officials recently made a linkage between injection wells and the tremendous increase in earthquakes in Oklahoma. However, it was also noted that induced earthquakes begin at low magnitudes and offer the opportunity to develop a response plan before major damage occurs, which Oklahoma is in the process of doing. **Michael Overbay, 665-6482**

REGION 6 REVIEWS AND PROVIDES COMMENTS ON ONE OF EPA'S NATIONAL HYDRAULIC FRACTURING OPERATIONS STUDY DRAFT REPORTS: A member of the Ground Water/UIC Section reviewed the draft report "Review of Well Operator Files for Hydraulically Fractured Oil and Gas Production Wells: Hydraulic Fracturing Operations" by the Office of Research and Development, and provided comments and recommendations. Overall, the draft report was found to be acceptable, after R6 recommended major revisions. **José Eduardo Torres, 665-8092**

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Currently, Mr. Lindil C. Fowler, Jr. is serving as acting executive director of the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC). Mr. Fowler previously served as the agency's general counsel. Commission action to fill the position permanently is unknown. Former executive director, Milton Rister, resigned effective August 31, 2015. The RRC regulates all oil and gas activity in Texas and maintains Underground Injection Control (UIC) primacy programs for both Class II and Class III brine mining injection wells. **Mike Frazier, 665-7236**

NMED FY15 END-OF-YEAR CWA 106 DISCUSSION: Members of the Ground Water/UIC Section participated in FY15 End-of-Year discussions with ground water staff of the New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) via conference call on September 23rd. The discussions focused on NMED activities under the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 106 Grant for Water Quality Management during the state fiscal year 2015. These efforts ensure that wastewater discharges are permitted to safeguard ground water resources. The R6 grants project officer was in Santa Fe for these discussions. **Omar Martinez, 665-8485; Lisa Pham, 665-8326, Arlene Gaines, 665-7163**

GULF OF MEXICO PROGRAM OFFICE